



TOWN OF CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WATER COMMISSIONERS & ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
15 MIDDLEFIELD RD
CHESTER MA 01011

Monday, April 12th, 2021

Open Meeting – Meeting in the Town Hall

Minutes and warrants were signed.

Selectmen John Baldasaro and Barbara Huntoon present, Selectmen Richard Holzman participating remotely over the phone. Town Hall staff present: Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, and Assessors' Clerk Laura Lafreniere. From the Water Improvement Committee Bob Daley, and Tom Bean, from the Finance Committee Andy Myers, Jason Fogue, and Jessica Sakaske. Highway Department Staff, Foreman Carl Baldasaro and Laborer Jason Ellershaw and per the agenda Dr. Richard Gullick from Water Compliance Solutions. Also, present included residents Lora Wade, Ed Meacham, and a few others. Water Department Operator Bernie St. Martin, and Elizabeth Massa and Nicholas Chiusano from the Board of Health were not present.

Barbara opened the meeting and mentioned to all that if anyone is recording that they are required to make it known. No one was recording.

- **Discussion of Water Department issues with Bernie St. Martin, Carl Baldasaro, Dr. Richard Gullick, and Jason Ellershaw.** A discussion opened with a question of why our Primary Water Dept. Operator Bernie St. Martin was not in attendance after being asked. Carl answered and said that he had spoke with Bernie on two separate occasions, both of which Bernie had stated that he would not be in attendance of the meeting. Bernie felt that he already did too much for the town and did not need to be at the meeting and maybe he should quit, as a summary from Carl. Barbara then opened the discussion to what would the plan be if Bernie were indeed to decide to step away as the Water Operator. Dr. Gullick then walked everyone through the plan of having White Water, Water and Waste Solutions who could take care of any treatments, having the Highway Department take care of the daily checks as well as any alarms and emergency calls and Dr. Gullick could handle monitoring all the levels from home if we have everything set up that he has suggested. DEP typically requires the Primary Operator to be

within a one-hour drive of the plant which Dr. Gullick does live further away than that. However, he thought DEP may waive the distance to grant an emergency license. The first thing that he suggested that we do is to have the system calibrated. John brought up to Dr. Gullick the suggestion from Bernie, rather than the plan that has been proposed by Dr. Gullick adding bleeder valves and consistent flushing of the hydrants. Dr. Gullick did not feel that this was a feasible solution, from the readings they had completed in August and again in February the problems did not seem to be in the lines themselves they were in the plant. John was frustrated because we have multiple inputs but without everyone in the same room it is difficult to get the answers we would like. Dr. Gullick affirmed John's feelings and agreed that he would have had better results and had more answers if there was more universal cooperation. Dr. Gullick is going to reach out to White Water, which as of right now he has in writing that they are willing to work with us. Andy mentioned that because of the cost and we are getting low in some of our accounts we need to schedule a Special Town Meeting, the Select Board agreed. Resident Lora Wade mentioned that she was interested in being a member of the Water Improvement Committee. Barbara told her that we were going to be appointing two people tonight and that all she needed to do was to write a letter of interest which she could do while she was sitting in the meeting if she liked. Dr. Gullick as well as the plan for the Water treatment plant has been working on the job description for the Water Department Primary Operator as well as a Primary Operator plan succession. Barbara is going to be looking at the response letter which will be going to DEP in our attempt to try to adjust the Water Treatment plant from a T2 to a T1.

- **Appoint Elizabeth Massa and Nicholas Chiusano to the Chester Water Improvement Committee.** Barbara and John had read the letters of interest from both. John made the motion to appoint both Elizabeth Massa and Nicholas Chiusano to the Water Improvement Committee, Rich 2nd all voted Aye. Earlier in the meeting resident Lora Wade spoke up that she was interested in joining the Water Improvement Committee. Lora wrote a letter of interest which Barbara then read. Rich made the motion to appoint Lora Wade to the Water Improvement Committee, John 2nd all voted Aye.
- **Vote to approve Erik Kinshurf CPA to town accountant position.** Barbara and Rich both support this decision as does John but felt that it needed to open for discussion. The cost for this for the first year is an estimated \$3,400 per month. The biggest concern from the Finance Committee is where do we find the funding for this and we need to be able to justify this cost at a town meeting. John made the point that with using a firm there is accountability and responsibility to the town where we can hold people to a commitment if we feel there is a problem. Andy also supported this decision and suggested a possible evaluation of the contract after a given time for negotiation of the cost. Kathe also brought up that we are not alone in this; other towns are also struggling to fill these positions which is in part why she has been taking the classes on Municipal Finance. This program has been created with Suffolk University because DLS knows there is a problem. Within the next few years there are several people throughout the state who hold these positions and are reaching retirement age with no one to replace them. Rich understood all the points of view brought to the table but felt that with the issue of time we could not afford NOT to do this. John made the motion to approve Erik Kinshurf CPA to the town accountant position subject to the contract negotiation and salary for a one-year contract with renewal and three-month review, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Monthly Financial Dept. updates.** Kathe went over the revenue report and Andy from the Finance Committee gave us an overview of the expenses vs. receipts. John mentioned that he appreciated doing this every month, and we are all working toward the same goal. Barbara brought up in the handbook from the state the Finance Committee should be the one who presents the budget to the town at Annual Town Meeting. John stated the Select Board took over presenting the budget when there was not an active Finance Committee, but since the current Finance Committee is active and involved, this is a good time to transition back. Bob Daley mentioned each member of the team taking a portion of the budget to present. Mary Ann stated that in the minutes for a Town Meeting presenting the budget for different views it is written; Finance Committee recommends, followed by Select Board recommends.

Town Administrator:

Kathe let us know that Terry Donovan our Animal Control Officer has decided that she is not going to resign she will stay with us.

Public Comments and Questions:

Sister Judith Dalesandro announced that the town election will be held on Saturday, May 1st from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. She further stated as of next week if a voter's street census is not turned in, that person becomes an inactive voter and will be required to bring an ID and a piece of mail with their address as proof of residency the next time they wish to vote. If you need a new copy of the street census you can find one on the town website under the news tab, the posting is from February 8th, 2021.

Andy Myers wanted to let everyone know that for Earth Day the Chester Hill Association will be doing a roadside pick up on Saturday April 24th beginning at 9:00 AM. They are hoping to work on Skyline Trail, Bromley Road, and East River Road, and they are going to have plastic bags for everyone.

Jason Forgeue made mention that we should get an account set up for the American Rescue Plan when this money does eventually get distributed to the town.

John made the motion to adjourn, Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.

Meeting Adjourned 8:28 PM

Respectfully Submitted

Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

4/14/21
Date Signed

Barbara Huntoon, Chairman

Date Signed _____

John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

4/24/21
Date Signed

Richard Holzman, Clerk

Date Signed _____